

MAGIC  TREE HOUSE #9

Dolphins at Daybreak

Mary Pope Osborne



Here's what kids have to say to

Mary Pope Osborne, author of
the Magic Tree House series:

WOW! You have an imagination like no other.—Adam W.

I love your books. If you stop writing books, it will be like losing a best friend.—Ben M.

I think you are the real Morgan le Fay. There is always magic in your books.—Erica Y.

One day I was really bored and I didn't want to read ... I looked in your book. I read a sentence, and it was interesting. So I read some more, until the book was done. It was so good I read more and more. Then I had read all of your books, and now I hope you write lots more.—Danai K.

I always read [your books] over and over ... 1 time, 2 times, 3 times, 4 times ... —Yuan C.

You are my best author in the world. I love your books. I read all the time. I read everywhere. My mom is like freaking out.—Ellen C.

I hope you make these books for all yours and mine's life.—Riki H.

Magic Tree House® books, too!

Thank you for opening faraway places and times to my class through your books. They have given me the chance to bring in additional books, materials, and videos to share with the class.—J. Cameron

It excites me to see how involved [my fourth-grade reading class] is in your books ... I would do anything to get my students more involved, and this has done it.—C. Rutz

I discovered your books last year ... WOW! Our students have gone crazy over them. I can't order enough copies! ... Thanks for contributing so much to children's literature!—C. Kendziora

I first came across your Magic Tree House series when my son brought one home ... I have since introduced this great series to my class. They have absolutely fallen in love with these books! ... My students are now asking me for more independent reading time to read them. Your stories have inspired even my most struggling readers.—M. Payne

I love how I can go beyond the [Magic Tree House] books and use them as springboards for other learning.—R. Gale

We have enjoyed your books all year long. We check your Web site to find new information. We pull our map down to find the areas where the adventures take place. My class always chimes in at key parts of the story. It feels good to hear my students ask for a book and cheer when a new book comes out.—J. Korinek

Our students have "Magic Tree House fever." I can't keep your books on the library shelf.—J. Rafferty

Your books truly invite children into the pleasure of reading. Thanks for such terrific work.—S. Smith

The children in the fourth grade even hide the [Magic Tree House] books in the library so that they will be able to find them when they are ready to check them out.—K. Mortensen

My Magic Tree House books are never on the bookshelf because they are always being read by my students. Thank you for creating such a wonderful series.—K. Mahoney



Dear Reader,

While I was trying to decide what to do for book number nine, kids kept asking me to send Jack and Annie under the ocean.

“But how will they breathe and talk underwater?” I asked.

After a number of kids suggested a submarine, I began researching the subject and learned about mini-sub, and that settled it.

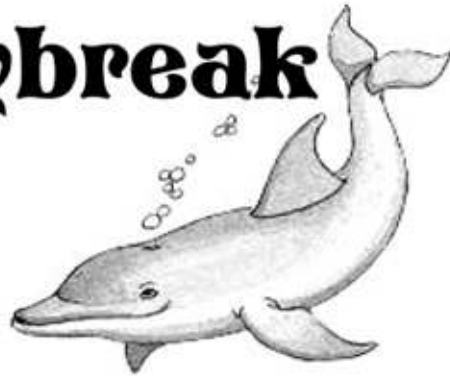
So, thanks to all the kids who’ve helped me—and keep helping me. I feel as if we’re all having these adventures together—you, me, Jack, and Annie.

Where do we go next? And what do you think will happen when we get there? Let me know

Mary Pope Osborne

MAGIC TREE HOUSE® #9


Dolphins at Daybreak



by Mary Pope Osborne

illustrated by Sal Murdocca

A STEPPING STONE BOOK™

Random House  New York



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SUMMARY: Their magic tree house takes Jack and Annie deep into the sea, where they meet up with dolphins, sharks, and octopi as they search for the answer to an ancient riddle.

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Special Preview of Magic Tree House #10: *Ghost Town at Sundown*

For Mattie Stepanek





Master Librarians

Jack stared out the kitchen window.

The sun was not up yet. But the sky was growing lighter.

Jack had been awake for a long time. He had been thinking about the dream he'd had—the dream about Morgan le Fay.

The tree house is back, Morgan had said. *I'm waiting.*

Jack wished that dreams were real. He missed Morgan's magic tree house.

"Jack!" His little sister Annie appeared in the doorway. "We have to go to the woods *now*," she said.

"Why?" Jack asked.

"I had a dream about Morgan!" exclaimed Annie. "She said the tree house is back and she's waiting for us!"

"That was *my* dream," said Jack.

"Oh, wow," said Annie. "She told you, too? So it *must* be important."

"But dreams aren't real," said Jack.

"Some dreams aren't. But this one is," said Annie. "I can just feel it." She opened the back door. "I'll see you later!"

"Wait—wait. I'm coming!" said Jack.

He raced up the stairs. *Having the same dream must mean something,* he thought.

He grabbed his backpack and threw his notebook and pencil into it.

Then he ran downstairs.

"We'll be back soon, Mom!" Jack called into the living room.

"Where you going so early?" his dad called.

"Just for a quick walk!" said Jack.

"It rained last night," called his mom. "Don't get your shoes wet."

"We won't!"

Jack slipped out the door. Annie was waiting for him.

"Let's go!" she said.

The sky was pale gray. The air felt freshly washed.

Jack and Annie ran up their quiet street to the Frog Creek woods.

They headed between the trees. Soon they came to the tallest oak in the woods. There was a wooden house high in the treetop.

"It is back!" whispered Jack.

Someone looked out the window of the tree house—a lovely old woman with long white hair. Morgan le Fay.

"Come up," called the magical librarian.

Jack and Annie climbed up the rope ladder and into the tree house.

In the dawn light, they stared at Morgan le Fay. She looked beautiful in a red velvet robe.

Jack pushed his glasses into place. He couldn't stop smiling.

"We both had dreams about you!" said Annie.

"I know," said Morgan.

"You do?"

"Yes, I sent them to you," said Morgan, "because I need your help."

"What kind of help?" said Jack.

"Merlin the Magician has been up to his tricks again," said Morgan. "So I haven't had any time to collect books for Camelot's library."

"Can we collect them for you?" asked Annie.

"Yes, but in order to gather books through time you must be Master Librarians," said Morgan.

"Oh, well," Annie said sadly.

“But you can *become* Master Librarians,” said Morgan, “if you pass the test.”

“Really?” said Annie.

“What kind of test?” Jack asked.

“You must show that you know how to do research,” said Morgan, “and show that you can find answers to hard questions.”

“How?” said Annie.

“By solving four riddles,” said Morgan. She reached into the folds of her robe and pulled out a rolled-up paper.

“The first riddle is written on this ancient scroll,” she said. “This book will help you find the answer.”

She held out a book. On the cover were the words *Ocean Guide*.



“This is where you have to go,” said Morgan.

“The ocean! Oh, boy!” said Annie. She pointed at the cover. “I wish we—”

“Stop!” Jack grabbed Annie’s hand. “How will we know if we’ve found the right answer to the riddle?” he asked Morgan.

“You will know,” Morgan said mysteriously. “I promise you will know.”

Jack let go of Annie's hand. She pointed again at the cover and finished her wish: "I wish we could go there."

The wind started to blow.

"Are you coming with us, Morgan?" Jack said.

Before Morgan could answer, the tree house started to spin.

Jack squeezed his eyes shut.

The tree house spun faster and faster.

Then everything was still.

Absolutely still.

Jack opened his eyes.

Morgan le Fay was gone.

Only the ancient scroll and the ocean book were left in her place.

The Reef

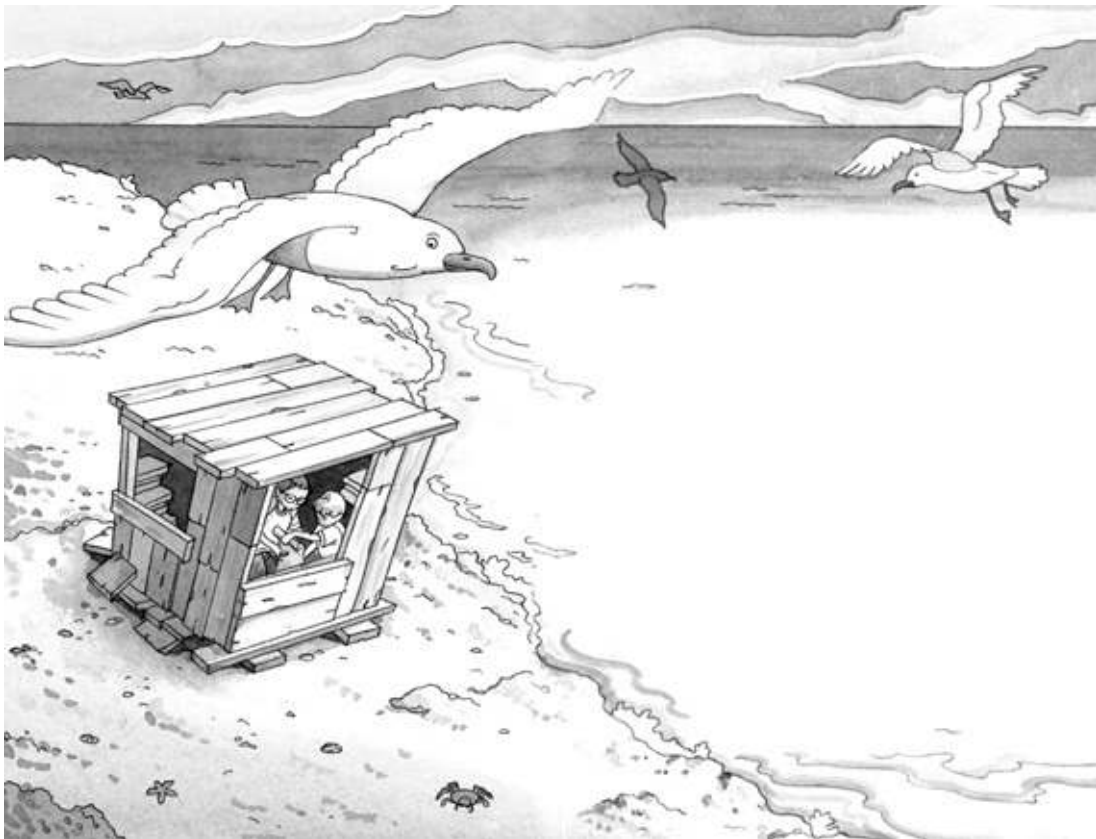
A breeze blew through the window. Sea gulls cried. Waves lapped the shore.

Annie picked up the riddle scroll. She unrolled it. Together she and Jack read the riddle:

Rough and gray as rock,
I'm plain as plain can be.
But hidden deep inside
There's great beauty in me.
What am I?

“Let's go find the answer,” said Annie.

She and Jack looked out the window. The tree house wasn't in a tree. It was on the ground



“Why is the ground pink?” said Jack.

“I don't know,” said Annie. “But I'm going out there.”

“I'm going to do a little research first,” said Jack.

Annie climbed out of the tree house.

Jack picked up the ocean book and flipped through it.

He found a picture of a pink island surrounded by water. He read:

This is a coral reef. Corals are tiny sea animals. After they die, their skeletons remain. Over time, the reef builds up from stacks of coral skeletons.

“Oh, man, tiny skeletons,” said Jack. He pulled out his notebook and wrote:

Millions of coral skeletons

“Jack! Jack! Come look at *this*,” cried Annie.

“What is it?”

“I don’t know. But you’ll love it!” she said.

Jack threw his notebook and the ocean book into his pack. He climbed out the window.

“Is it the answer to the riddle?” he called.

“I don’t think so. It doesn’t look very plain,” said Annie.

She was standing at the edge of the water. Beside her was a strange-looking machine.

Jack hurried over the bumpy coral to get a better look.

The machine was half on the reef and half in the clear blue water. It looked like a huge white bubble with a big window.

“Is it a special kind of boat?” asked Annie.

Jack found a picture of the machine in the ocean book. He read:

Scientists who study the ocean are called oceanographers. Sometimes they travel in small diving vessels called submersibles, or “mini subs,” to study the ocean floor.

“It’s a mini-sub,” said Jack. He pulled out his notebook.

“Let’s get inside it,” said Annie.

“No!” said Jack. Actually, he did want to see what the sub looked like inside. But he shook his head. “We can’t. It’s not ours.”

“Just a teeny peek,” said Annie. “It might help us figure out the riddle.”

Jack sighed. “Okay. But we have to be careful. Don’t touch anything,” he said.

“Don’t worry,” said Annie.

“And take off your shoes so they won’t get wet,” said Jack.

He and Annie slipped off their shoes and socks and threw them toward the tree house.

Then they stepped carefully over the sharp coral.

Annie turned the handle on the hatch of the mini-sub. It opened.

She and Jack climbed inside. The hatch slammed shut.

The mini-sub was tiny. Two seats faced the big window. In front of the seats was a computer built into a control panel.

Annie sat down.



Jack opened the ocean book and read more on the mini-sub page:

Mini subs have strong hulls to keep air in and protect those aboard from water pressure. Computers are used to guide the mini-sub through the ocean.

“Oops,” said Annie.

“What’s wrong?” Jack looked up.

Annie was waving her hands in front of the computer. Now the screen showed a map.

“What’s going on?” said Jack.

“I just pressed a few keys—” said Annie.

“What? I said not to touch anything!” said Jack.

An air blower came on. The mini-sub jerked backward.

“Get out!” said Jack.

He and Annie scrambled for the hatch. Jack grabbed the handle.

But they were too late.

The mini-sub slid off the reef.

Then it dove silently down into the deep.



“You’ve really done it now, Annie!” said Jack.

“Sorry, sorry. But look out the window!” Annie said. “Look!”

“Forget it! We have to figure this out!” Jack stared at the computer. He saw a row of pictures at the top of the screen.

“What did you do?” he asked.

“I just pressed the ON button,” said Annie.



“The screen lit up. And I pressed the starfish.”

“That must be the command to go under the water,” said Jack.

“Yeah. Then the map came on,” said Annie.

“Okay, okay. The map shows the reef,” said Jack. “Look! There’s the mini-sub on the map. It’s moving away from the reef.”

“It’s like a video game,” said Annie. “I bet I know what to do.”

Annie pressed a key with an arrow pointing right. The mini-sub on the screen moved right. The real mini-sub turned to the right, also.

“Great!” said Jack with relief. “You press the arrows to steer the mini-sub. So now we can go back.”

“Oh, no, not right away,” said Annie. “It’s so beautiful down here.”

“We have to get back to the reef,” said Jack. His eyes were still glued to the computer screen. “What if the owners find it gone?”

“Look out the window,” said Annie. “Just for one teeny second.”

Jack sighed. He pushed his glasses into place and looked up. “Oh, man,” he said softly.

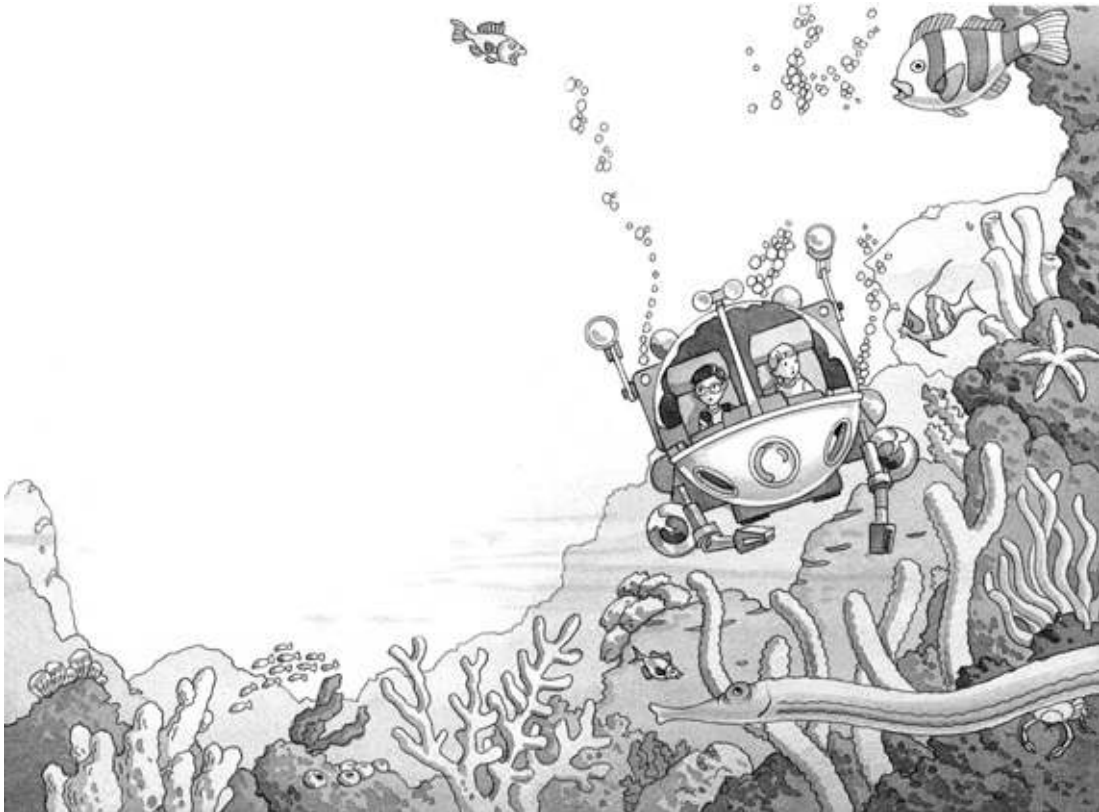
Outside the glass was a strange world of bright moving color.

It looked like another planet.

The mini-sub was moving past red, yellow, and blue coral—past little coral mountain valleys, and caves—past fishes of every color and size.

“Can’t we stay a little while? The answer to Morgan’s riddle must be here,” said Annie.

Jack nodded slowly. She might be right, he thought. Besides, when would they ever get to visit a place like this again?



Fish City

There were fish everywhere: floating over the swaying sea grass, eating on the white sand bottom, peeping out of coral caves.

Some kinds of coral looked like blue fingers or lacy fans. Others looked like deer antlers or lettuce leaves or mushrooms or trees.

Jack read in the book:

Coral reefs are only found in warm, tropical waters. Nearly 5,000 different species of fish live around coral reefs in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Jack pulled out his pencil and notebook.

He started to write a list.

Coral Reef Research
warm water
over 5,000 kinds of fish

“Look!” said Annie.

The sub floated past a huge starfish. Then a pink jellyfish. Then a blue sea horse.

Jack added to his list:

starfish
jellyfish
sea horses

“What is *that*?” said Annie.

Jack saw a creature that looked like a giant pancake with a long tail.

“A *stingray*!” said Jack. He put that on his list as well.

“And that?” said Annie.

She pointed at the biggest shell Jack had ever seen. It was as big as a footstool.

“I’ll have to check on that one,” said Jack. He turned the pages of the ocean book. When he got to the page about clams, he read aloud:

The giant clam of the coral reef is three feet wide and weighs up to 200 pounds.

“Wow,” said Annie.

“No kidding,” said Jack. He added “giant clam” to his list.

“Dolphins!” cried Annie.

Jack looked up. Two dolphins were peering in the window. They tapped their noses against the glass.

Their eyes were bright. They seemed to be smiling.

Jack laughed. “It’s like *we’re* in a fish tank—and they’re looking at *us*,” he said.

“Their names are Sukie and Sam,” said Annie. “Sister and brother.”

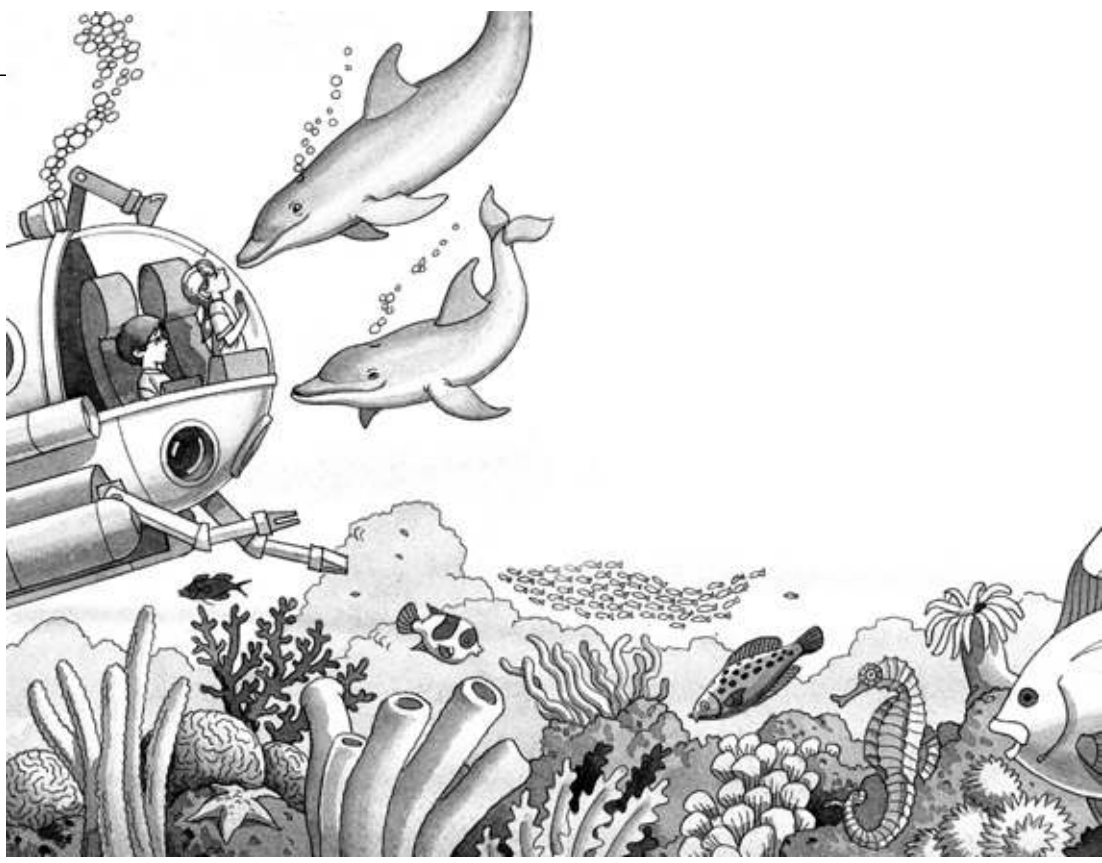
“You’re nuts,” said Jack.

“Here’s a kiss for you, Sukie,” Annie said. She pressed her lips to the glass as if she were kissing the dolphin’s nose.

“Oh, brother,” said Jack.

But the dolphin opened her mouth and tossed her head. She seemed to be laughing.

“Hey, I know the answer to the riddle—dolphins!” said Annie. “They’re gray and plain. But they have great beauty inside.”



“You forgot the ‘rough as a rock’ part,” said Jack. “Dolphin skin looks smooth and slippery.”

“Oh, right,” said Annie.

The dolphins flipped their tails. They swam off into the light blue water.

“Wait! Don’t go!” called Annie. “Sukie!”

But the dolphins were gone.

“It’s time for us to go, too,” said Jack. He was afraid someone might be looking for the mini-sub.

“But we haven’t solved the riddle,” said Annie.

Jack studied the bright underwater world.

“I don’t see the answer,” he said. “There’s nothing plain at all out there.”

“Then maybe the answer’s in the mini-sub,” said Annie.

They looked around the tiny space.

“I’ll check the computer,” said Jack. He studied the row of pictures at the top of the screen.

He pressed the book picture.

The words SHIP'S LOG flashed onto the screen.



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